

**City of Falls Church, VA**

**GMHS/MEHMS Campus**

**Planning Roadmap**

**June 23, 2014**



**Joint Process Planning Committee**

**Spring 2014**

**Members:**

David Tarter, Mayor

David Snyder, Vice Mayor

Susan Kearney, School Board Chair

John D. Lawrence, School Board Member

Ruth Rodgers, Planning Commission Chair

Michael Novotny, Economic Development Authority

Wyatt Shields, City Manager

Toni Jones, Superintendent of Schools

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## **The Process Planning Committee**

The George Mason/Mary Ellen Henderson Campus Joint Process Planning Committee (the Committee) was established by School Board resolution on December 20, 2013, and City Council resolution on January 27, 2014.

The purpose of the Committee was to map out the planning (i.e., identifying decision points) and process for coordination, collaboration, and expert guidance for the “School-Related Parcels” site incorporated into the City of Falls Church boundaries from Fairfax County in a 2013 boundary adjustment agreement. A collaborative process is needed for the property as 24.76 acres of the parcel is owned by the School Board, and the remaining 9.96 acres is owned by the City of Falls Church. The Committee has also been tasked with establishing a process and a schedule for planning tasks to be done in an open and coordinated manner by City Council, School Board, appropriate City Boards and Commissions, and professional staff, with input from the public.

The Committee was composed of representation from the following:

- City Council – 2 members – David Tarter, Mayor; David Snyder, Vice Mayor
- School Board – 2 members – Susan Kearney, Chair; John D. Lawrence, Member
- Planning Commission – 1 member – Ruth Rodgers, Chair
- Economic Development Authority – 1 member – Michael Novotny, Member
- Support is also provided by Wyatt Shields, City Manager; Toni Jones, School Superintendent; James Snyder Planning Director; Rick Goff, Director of Economic Development; Tom Horn, School Attorney; Becky Witsman, Business Development Manager; Garrison Kitt, Senior Planner; Paul Stoddard, Senior Planner.

The Committee met on the following dates:

- February, 12, 2014
- February 20, 2014
- February 27, 2014
- March, 20, 2014
- April 10, 2014
- April 24, 2014

All meetings were publicly noticed, and minutes were kept and posted on the City and School web sites. The meetings included general discussions within the group of the area and the process to be considered, as well as consultation with industry experts and staff. As a result of these meetings and discussions the Committee has developed this Process.

The Committee received guest speakers included Bob Wulff from George Mason University, who shared a philosophical and theoretical approach to planning and development and provided guidance for questions to be considered. HESS Construction was a guest and provided information on how to compact the footprint for an urban high school and future considerations and timelines which will need to be

addressed. Mary Filardo, Executive Director of 21st Century School Fund, spoke with the committee on May 8, 2014 to discuss The Oyster School experience with public private partnership in Washington, DC.

The Committee recommends that the School Board and City Council create a Steering Committee to further the work on the initial planning Committee. A planning roadmap has been produced to assist the Steering Committee in the future. An addendum of recommended Rules of Procedure for the Steering Committee has also been provided as part of this document. While the GM/MEH Process Planning Committee functioned with an informal structure, it is advised that the Steering Committee utilize the attached Rules of Procedure to maximize efficiency and ensure the integrity of the process for this large-scale project.

## **The Site**

The site in consideration is referred to as the “School-Related Parcels” in the 2013 boundary adjustment agreement between the City of Falls Church and Fairfax County titled, “Voluntary Boundary Adjustment Agreement By and Between the City of Falls Church, Virginia, and Fairfax County, Virginia” adopted by Falls Church City Council resolution TR13-13 on April 22, 2013 and approved by voter referendum on November 5, 2013. On December 13, 2013 a Special Court appointed by the Virginia Supreme Court approved the voluntary boundary adjustment agreement that brought 38.4 acres from the jurisdiction of Fairfax County into the jurisdiction of the City of Falls Church. The property is owned by both the City and the City School Board, with 24.8 acres of the parcel owned by the School Board, and the remaining 10 acres owned by the City of Falls Church. The Schools-Related Parcels area is the larger of two areas transferred to the City in the adjustment; it is 34.8 acres. The stipulations of the agreement for the Schools-Related Parcels are as follows:

“At least 70% of the acreage... shall be used for school purposes for a period of at least 50 years...Up to 30% of the total acreage... may be used for any lawful purpose...”

The agreement allows up to 10.3 acres of the site to be used for economic development. The site is bounded approximately by Leesburg Pike (State Route 7), Haycock Road, and Falls Church Drive (an unsigned Metro access road). It is located adjacent to the West Falls Church Metro Station to the east of the site and exit 66 from Interstate 66 to the west of the site. The site currently contains Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School and George Mason High School, as well as recreational fields and parking lots related to the schools. The VT/UVA Center is adjacent to the properties at the corner of Falls Church Drive and Haycock Road.

## **Purpose of the Process Roadmap**

Due to the very unique circumstances of the site – a new addition to the City boundary, currently developed and used as a high school and middle school site, proximity to metro, proximity to Interstate 66 – the City seeks to move forward with economic development on up to 30% of the site allowed for such as stipulated in the boundary adjustment agreement with Fairfax County. The City also seeks to meet the need for a larger modern high school facility, balanced with the general economic interests of the City. Given the unique opportunities and challenges of meeting the multiple goals for this site, the School Board and City Council are keenly interested in pursuing a coordinated planning approach.

The Process Planning Committee was created to lay out a roadmap for coordinated, open, and effective decision making for the future of this site. The issues identified and presented herein outline a Process Roadmap, which are meant to help guide the City through the process of planning, designing and developing a new high school and the planning, zoning, and approvals for private, commercial development of up to 30% of the site. This Process Roadmap represents a multi-year outline and may need to be amended periodically due to changes in timing or other reasons as decided by responsible parties.

This document is meant as guidance for the process and was created with the understanding that the process may evolve over time. It has been created based on expert advice and informed opinions as a result of the Committee's meetings and consultations. This Process Roadmap is not meant to be a binding schedule of specific actions, but rather a suggestion for general issues to be considered and possible decisions that can be made based on these issues.

## **IMMEDIATE ISSUES**

**2014**

### **ISSUE 1: Staffing**

Determine the need for staff support for both City and Schools. Currently, there is insufficient staff support for the following needs:

- Gathering basic key information
- Managing consultants
- Drafting & managing grant applications
- Managing contacts with stakeholders
- Managing public input sessions
- Coordinating effort among Planning, School, and other staff
- Keeping the Planning Process moving forward
- Supporting the work of Steering Committee, governing bodies, Planning Commission

Ultimately any requests for new staff positions, including job descriptions, hours, qualifications, performance goals, will be developed by the City Manager or School Superintendent. The direct governing body (City Council or School Board) will ultimately determine if such a request is necessary for each particular organization and appropriate funds accordingly.

### **ISSUE 2: Seeking Outside Consultant**

The Steering Committee will need to decide if outside consultation is needed and determine if there are any grants that could be of help for planning the site. The Steering Committee may utilize outside consultation resources to better understand the economic potential of the site and the realistic composition of development that is possible. City and School staff will work with the City Council and School Board during consultant vetting and hiring processes, and during grant identification and application processes. Steps in hiring any outside consultants would include developing an RFP, interviewing consulting firms that respond to the RFP, and selecting the respondent that offers the most relevant expertise at an acceptable rate. Funds are included in the FY2015 CIP for this purpose.

The City may need to seek outside professional consultation for the following:

- Identify case studies of similarly developed sites
- Property Survey
- Identifying School Needs & Funding
- Determining appropriate location for development
- Transportation Site Plan
- Financial Model & Fiscal Impact Analysis

### **DECISION 2a: Use of the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel**

Staff applied for and the City was awarded a ULI Technical Assistance Panel grant in February 2014. The TAP is slated for fall 2014. The grant is for \$7,500 and will require a \$7,500 match from the City. It will involve a panel of experts analyzing the area and discussing specific questions developed for them by the Steering Committee over a two day period, and will result in a final report.

### **DECISION 2b: When (and If) to Issue an RFI**

The City may choose to issue an RFI to potential developers of the property at this point of the process, or perhaps later in the process. The purpose of issuing an RFI would be to gather information from the private sector on potential design, layout, and uses for the site and to inform the City's understanding of its economic potential. Timing is a major factor in the possible issuance of an RFI.

## **ISSUE 3: Steering Committee**

The Process Planning Committee was initially scheduled to sunset on May 1, 2014, and extended to July 1, 2014. A Steering Committee comprised of various stakeholders is recommended to oversee the process and ensure effective coordination between the school facility planning and economic development planning. The goal is that all stakeholder interests are represented throughout all steps of the process. The recommended representation on the Steering Committee is the same as that on the Joint Process Planning Committee:

- School Board – 2 members
- City Council – 2 members
- Planning Commission – 1 member
- Economic Development Authority – 1 member

The Steering Committee will schedule regular meetings and receive periodic reports as to the progress of the actions listed herein. Members of the Steering Committee will also report back to their representative bodies as to the progress of these actions. The Steering Committee will be responsible for providing guidance, input, and recommendations to this Process Plan as needed during the process progression. The Steering Committee will also amend this Process Plan and schedule as needed. Given the importance of the effort, a set of Rules of Procedure have been developed for the conduct of Steering Committee Meetings (attached as Appendix C).

## **ISSUE 4: Engaging with Neighbors**

It is essential not to plan the area in a vacuum. Fairfax County, agencies, educational institutions, and other key stakeholders will be consulted as to the current state of adjacent properties and their future plans and potential. Contacts with the following have been established and will be maintained throughout the planning and development process:

Adjacent Property Owners:



- WMATA
- UVA & VA Tech (lease holder)

Adjacent Municipalities:

- Fairfax County

Other Agencies:

- VDOT

## **ISSUE 5: Interim Zoning & Land Use designation for the Site**

The site is zoned R-1A (Low Density Residential District) by virtue of it being recently included within the City's boundaries by the boundary adjustment agreement, but it does not have a Future Land Use designation in the Comprehensive Plan. Land use actions are under the authority of the Planning Commission and the City Council, and the Steering Committee's role would be to advise and coordinate these potential actions in the context of the broader site planning effort.

Interim zoning should allow school uses by right, at a minimum, and would likely require that future private development on the site obtain appropriate rezoning and land use approvals, in addition to the approval by the City and School Board for the sale or lease of land.

Later, after developing a clearer vision for the future of the site, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and zoning regulations (including possibly a zoning overlay district) could be adopted that would best serve to carry out that vision.

### **DECISION 5a: Planning Opportunity Area**

Designating the area as an official Planning Opportunity Area could help give general guidance for the future vision, planning, and implementation in the area within the City's Comprehensive Plan.

### **DECISION 5b: Special Zoning District**

A special zoning district or category could be created to distinguish educational uses from commercial uses.

## **COMMUNITY VISION**

**2015**

**ISSUE 1: Creating a Vision for Future Schools and Economic Development on the site.**

Before Master Plans for the area are developed, basic questions should be asked and answered. Several key questions are listed below, and a fuller list should be developed by stakeholders and lead to the creation of a clear consensus on what the City and Schools desire on the site. Answering these questions will require input from consultants, staff, the public and other resources in a public decision making process. This should create an informed decision making process based on the best location and opportunities for economic development on the site in order to assist with logistics and planning.

#### **DECISION 1a: Schools**

During the planning and design phase, important questions for the new schools will be studied and ultimately resolved. These may include:

- How much school program space is needed, now and in the future?
- How tall will the school be? (How many stories?)
- Where will the school structure(s) be located on the site?
- How much playing field space is needed now and in the future, and where should it be located?
- How much land will be dedicated to school use?
- Are there creative ways to handle parking?
- And others.

#### **DECISION 1b: Economic Development**

During the planning and design phase, important questions for the new private development will be studied and ultimately resolved. These may include:

- What type of economic development will generate the best long term financial impact for the City?
- Where will it be located on the site?
- What kinds of uses will be favored?
- How will people access the site?
- What are the key elements of design / aesthetics the City will protect and promote?
- How will commercial uses be buffered from or interface with the schools?
- And others.

### **ISSUE 2: Master Planning**

Consultation with stakeholders and industry experts will be important during this process in order to get realistic ideas on the best use of the site based on existing and future projected market conditions. School design and development is key to project development. City and Schools will work to balance school construction needs with a vision to maintain and support all academic and student activity functions while also balancing the needs for economic development to generate revenue. The Commercial Master Plan and the School Master Plan will inform and relate to each other.

#### **DECISION 2a: Commercial Master Plan**

The Steering Committee will need to consider:

- What level of detail is appropriate for the plan?
- Will the Plan be based on current market conditions or projected future conditions?
- Should the City issue an RFI to get ideas from developers?

The Land Use Master Plan should at a minimum include the following:

- General Framework for Uses and Density
- Development Standards
- Land Use Regulations
- Transportation Requirements

## **DECISION 2b: School Master Plan**

The Schools will work with school construction experts and the community to determine a School Master Plan for the construction of a new school on the site that works synergistically with the desired outcome to have as much of the 30% available as possible for the economic development.

Several considerations when developing the Plan include:

- School Program Needs  
(School space, facility, athletic field needs)
- School Parking Needs  
(Bus parking, shared parking, parking structures)
- Building Sites  
(Best location on the site for school buildings, fields, and other facilities)
- Timing  
(When are new facilities needed? Will it be constructed concurrent with commercial development?)
- Project Management & Staffing  
(Assignment of staff or consultant to manage implementation)

A resource for developing a School Master Plan is the “Guidelines for School Facilities In Virginia’s Public Schools” prepared by the Virginia Department of Education, Office of Support Services. Appendix A of the document contains “Guidelines for Developing A School Building Project” that lists a comprehensive time schedule for the necessary steps involved in building a new school. These guidelines and other related information can be viewed here:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/facility\\_construction/school\\_construction/regs\\_guidelines/guidelines.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/facility_construction/school_construction/regs_guidelines/guidelines.pdf)

## **ISSUE 3: Financial Model**

The City currently has a sophisticated cost revenue impact model that is used to evaluate development proposals. This tool can serve as an input to the development of a financial model that is more specifically geared to inform public decision making on planning for the site. The financial model should provide sensitivity analysis to changes in the school program and cost and changes to the development

program and its associated revenues and service costs. This additional modeling may be created internally by City and School staff, or developed with the help of a consultant.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **2016**

#### **ISSUE 1: Implementation Plan**

Once the City and Schools have created a Master Plan and financial model for the area based on internal discussion, consultation, and public input, an Implementation Plan can be created. The Implementation Plan will lay out a schedule and strategy for realizing the Master Plan. Funding mechanisms will be an important part of the Implementation Plan. A target for school completion and opening date may also be considered.

##### **DECISION 1a: School Financing**

A financing plan for the new high school can be included in the Implementation Plan. The Virginia Department of Education has comprehensive School Construction Cost Data for other projects around the state for reference purposes available on the Virginia.gov website at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/facility\\_construction/school\\_construction/costs/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/facility_construction/school_construction/costs/)

Several mechanisms for financing are available:

- Public-Private Educational Facilities Infrastructure Act of 2002 (PPEA)

According to the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of General Services, a PPEA allows “private entities to ‘acquire, design, construct, improve, renovate, expand, equip, maintain or operate qualifying projects’ and encourages innovative approaches to financing construction and renovation.

The law created resources to fund a comprehensive range of projects, including schools...essentially any type of public venture.”

- Bonds

Financing is available by General Obligation Debt through direct local government borrowing, Literary Fund Direct Loan, and/or through the Virginia Public School Authority.

- Developer Contributions

More traditional school funding could be accompanied by sale or lease of land for commercial redevelopment. Contributions from development could be used to help fund the construction of a new school.

- Other Funding Options

Other options for funding can be explored.

### **DECISION 1b: Commercial Development**

Commercial development should meet City and School needs and provide a large economic benefit to the City, including either the potential sale or lease of the property, as well as on-going and future tax revenue. It will be the decision of the City to review the proposals for development based on the previously drafted Master Plan for the area. Some suggestions for elements regarding commercial development in an Implementation Plan include the following:

- Use the Land Use Master Plan to develop an RFP
- Phasing and Timing
- Draft stipulations for a Public-Private Partnership

### **DECISION 1c: Sale or Lease of Land**

The City and Schools will need to decide whether the land will be sold or leased to developers. The Implementation Plan could consider one or both of these. Each option should be thoroughly explored. The City and Schools may wish to include both options in the Implementation Plan with specific stipulations proposed for each.

### **DECISION 1d: Creation of a Schedule**

A comprehensive timeline can be created for project implementation up to the sale or lease of the property. Internal discussion, consultation, and research on prior projects in the City and the area can be used to create a realistic timeline. The timeline should list guidelines for completion of each step in the process. The schedule should also set a comprehensive timeline and target date for school opening.

## **ISSUE 2: Selection of Developer(s) for Commercial Development**

The developer selection process may utilize the previously created Master Plan and Implementation Plan to create a Request For Quotation (RFQ) and Request For Proposal (RFP).

### **DECISION 2a: When and if to issue an RFQ**

An RFQ can be issued prior to the RFP in order to help the City determine which developers have the experience and qualifications required to best achieve the land use goals for the property. An RFQ can help to streamline the RFP process by pre-selecting potential developers to which the RFP would then be issued. Criteria for selection of a developer during the RFQ process could include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Prior similar projects
- Financial solvency
- Track record of timely project completion

**DECISION 2b: Issuance of an RFP**

An RFP may be drafted using the conditions listed in the Land Use and Schools Master Plans and the provisions outlined in the Implementation Plan.

**ISSUE 3: Selection of a Process for School Construction**

Falls Church City Public Schools can select a process, and ultimately, a contractor for the construction of the new High School.

**DECISION 3a: Issuance of a School Construction RFP**

Falls Church City Public Schools could issue an RFP based on necessary criteria and select a contractor accordingly.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**To Be Determined**

**ISSUE 1: Development Agreement, or Sale or Lease of the Property**

After selection of a developer an agreement can be drafted between the developer and the City and/or Schools. The agreement should be consistent with the Master Plan and Implementation Plan for the area.

**ISSUE 2: City Financing**

**ISSUE 3: School Construction**

**ISSUE 4: Construction Management**

**ISSUE 5: Inspections**

**ISSUE 6: Compliance**



APPENDIX A: Site Map



## APPENDIX B: Authorizations

RESOLUTION 2014-06

### RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A GEORGE MASON/MARY ELLEN HENDERSON CAMPUS JOINT PROCESS PLANNING COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the Water Referendum passed with an overwhelming majority; and

WHEREAS, the zoning rights on the GM/MEH Campus will now fall under Falls Church City; and

WHEREAS, the community is eager to support planning and development on the GM/MEH Campus; and

WHEREAS, the planning process will take considerable time, collaboration, and City engagement; and

WHEREAS, the planning process needs to begin immediately.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Falls Church, as follows:

- 1) In coordination with the Falls Church City School Board, a joint planning committee is hereby established whose purpose is specifically to: map out the planning (i.e., identifying decision points) and process for coordination, collaboration, and expert guidance no later than April 1, 2014. The committee is to be composed of the following members: 2 School Board members, 2 City Council members, 1 Planning Commission member, 1 Economic Development Authority member. Support shall be provided by the City Manager and School Superintendent.
- 2) The purpose of this joint planning committee is not to carry out the planning tasks necessary to accomplish the City's school development and economic development goals in the boundary adjustment area, but rather to establish a process and a schedule for these planning tasks to be done in an open and coordinated manner by City Council, School Board, appropriate City Boards and Commissions, and professional staff, with input from the public.
- 3) After the development of the initial process roadmap, the joint planning committee will monitor the progress of the planning effort and coordinate any changes to the schedule and process as circumstances and new information may require. The joint planning committee shall sunset on May 1, 2014, unless extended by resolution of the City Council and City School Board.

Reading: 01-27-14

Adoption: 01-27-14

(TR14-07)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the foregoing was adopted by the City Council of the City of Falls Church, Virginia on January 27, 2014 as Resolution 2014-06.



Kathleen Clarken Buschow  
City Clerk



**Resolution**

**FCCPS School Board**



**Establishment of a George Mason/MEH Campus Planning Committee**

WHEREAS, the Water Referendum passed with an overwhelming majority; and

WHEREAS, the zoning rights on the GM/MEH Campus will now fall under Falls Church City; and

WHEREAS, the community is eager to support planning and development on the GM/MEH Campus; and

WHEREAS, the planning process will take considerable time, collaboration, and City engagement; and

WHEREAS, the planning process needs to begin immediately; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Falls Church City School Board and Falls Church City Council form a joint planning committee specifically to: map out the planning and process for coordination, collaboration, and expert guidance no later than January 2014. The committee is to be comprised of the following members: 2 School Board members, 2 City Council members, 1 Planning Commission member, City Manager, and School Superintendent.

School Board Assigned Members: December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Hereby: Susan Kearney and John Lawrence will serve as School Board representatives on such planning committee as resolved and approved by the FCCPS School Board.

## **APPENDIX C: MEH/GM Campus Planning - Steering Committee**

### **Rules of Procedure (04/13/2014)**

1. The Steering Committee ("Committee") will operate in compliance with Chapter 37, section 2.2 Code of Virginia, The Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
  - a. Open Meetings – notice of the meetings will be given; all meetings will be open to the public, and minutes will be recorded and preserved.
  - b. Closed Meetings – the Committee may properly convene a closed meeting when the subject matter meets one of the statutory exemptions to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (acquisition or disposition of property, prospective business, legal advice, etc.)
2. The Committee will consist of (members – TBD.);
  - a. Alternates will be allowed.
3. A simple majority of the Committee members is required to be present at a meeting in order for the Committee to conduct business and reach a decision. Meetings with less than a simple majority may be conducted; however, no official actions may be taken.
4. The Committee will elect Co-Chairs, and designate a recorder (if recorder is not a member of the Committee the recorder's participation in meetings is limited to matters of procedure, minutes, or as directed by the Chairs).
  - a. The chair(s) retain full rights to participate in the debate, discussion, and voting by the Committee.
  - b. One Chair selected from the City Council
  - c. One Chair selected from the School Board.
5. Only members of the Committee may participate in Committee meeting debate and discussion except;
  - a. Public Request for Agenda item – members of the public may request, through the City Manager or School Superintendent, up to 5 minutes of Committee time, at least three days in advance of the meeting, during which they may discuss topics approved by the Co-Chairs.
  - b. Public Comment – the Committee Chairs may allow public comment at the beginning of Committee meetings. Speakers will be asked to fill out a comment slip and will be allotted up to 3 minutes to make their comments.
  - c. Invited Guests – as determined by the Committee and with approval of the co-Chairs, the Committee may receive "guests" with particular expertise or knowledge of pertinent subject matter. The meeting notice and agenda will identify any invited guests, and with reasonable specificity indicate the subject matter for discussion.
6. City and School staff may participate in Committee debate and discussion, at the discretion of the co-Chairs, and only when recognized by the co-Chairs.
7. A minority report may accompany any voted decision. Majority and minority opinions will be stated in the committee's minutes. When a recommendation from the committee is forwarded to the City Council or School Board the vote tally and majority and minority opinions will be disclosed.